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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E JTREADWELL, INR FEHRENREICH, DRL MDAVIS

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SUBJECT: TANZANIAN ALBINOS: SOME GOVERNMENT SUCCESS AS MURDERS  
DECLINE

REF: 2009 DAR ES SALAAM 29

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Government efforts in 2009 to curb attacks against Tanzanians with albinism met with some success, as the number of murders dropped to 7, from 27 in 2008. From leadership by the President and the Prime Minister to police and judicial work resulting in several convictions of killers, the issue has remained in the public eye. However, the threat of violence against persons with albinism persists, particularly in the rural areas of the Lake Zone. The ongoing threat leads some persons with albinism continue to isolate themselves as a means of protection. NGOs active in support for the community have concerns that the level of violence against persons with albinism will increase in 2010 as politicians seek the assistance of witchdoctors to ensure success at the polls. END SUMMARY.

#### Government Response to the Violence

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¶2. (U) During 2009, the GOT took a number of steps to combat violence against persons with albinism; both the President and Prime Minister played important leadership roles. In January 2009, President Kikwete told a rally organized by the Tanzania Albino Society that his administration would not tolerate attacks against persons with albinism and would take measures to protect them. For his part, Prime Minister Pinda revoked the licenses of witchdoctors and traditional healers suspected of using the body parts of persons with albinism. The announcement received the support of some traditional healers in Manyara region, who admitted publicly that their colleagues were encouraging the ritual killings. (Note: Pinda's adoption of a child with albinism received wide media coverage and was a striking example of fighting stigma. End Note.)

¶3. (SBU) In March 2009, the government asked residents in regions across the country to name the perpetrators of violence against persons with albinism (and other crimes) in secret "polls." This effort appears to have provided useful information for law enforcement. By September police had in custody approximately 90 people accused of crimes against persons with albinism. Nonetheless, the Tanzanian Albino Society (TAS) criticized the effort, both for lack of transparency (the GOT declined TAS' offer to serve on the polls' oversight body and would not identify members of that body) and for failure of the police to arrest many of the accused.

¶4. (U) The first trials for alleged albino killers began in June 2009. The GOT came under heavy criticism from local and international NGOs when the trials were suspended for lack of funds. After the trials resumed in September 2009, a verdict in a case against three suspects was delivered quickly (particularly by Tanzanian standards - accused persons sometimes wait up to five years for a trial). To date, seven persons have been sentenced to death by hanging for attacks on two individuals. In addition, there

are five cases currently in the hands of prosecutors in the Shinyanga and Mwanza regions. The seven cases so far taken on by prosecutors are still far fewer than the estimated fifty confirmed murders of persons with albinism since 2007. (Note: NGOs believe some attacks go unreported due to family member involvement and thus, the number of actual deaths may be higher. End note.) Although killings have decreased, perhaps in response to the publicity surrounding the secret polls and prosecutions, they have not ended. The most recent murder, of a ten year old boy, occurred in October 2009 in Mwanza region. His killers have yet to be arrested.

#### Inadequate Protection

15. (U) For the most part, the GOT has looked to families and communities to protect persons with albinism. However, NGOs report that the burden of protection, which involves providing secure housing as well as food and material support, has overwhelmed relatives and neighbors in many communities. Three schools have been designated as safe havens for children with albinism. These too have become overwhelmed, in part because adults have sought refuge with their children. Under the Same Sun, a Canadian NGO with a branch in Tanzania, expressed concern about the impact of isolating children with albinism, suggesting that it may further stigmatize them.

#### Efforts to Raise Awareness

16. (U) The GOT and NGOs are involved in efforts to raise awareness about albinism as well as to educate people about the misguided belief in the magical powers of albino parts. The Commission on Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) launched in October 2009

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an "omnibus" initiative to stop the killings, which included public inquiries, investigations, and educational outreach about human rights violations associated with attacks on persons with albinism. Under the Same Sun, TAS, and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are all working to raise awareness. Additional support measures include provision of sunscreen, braille machines, and household supplies.

#### Concerns Heightened for 2010

17. (U) Under the Same Sun representatives are worried that the October 2010 national elections may increase the threat to persons with albinism. They suspect that politicians may seek the assistance of witchdoctors during campaigns, thus fueling attacks for the body parts trade.

#### U.S. Actions

18. (U) In January 2009, the Embassy called attention to violence against people with albinism by selecting the albino community to receive our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major for Justice award (reftel). With USG funding, Public and International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), a U.S. based NGO, is assisting the GOT to improve its human rights framework, particularly for marginalized groups. One component of PILPG's work will focus specifically on the albino community.

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